RHYMES FROM A ROUND UP CAMP

SIGNED

WALLACE DAVID COBURN

Chas. Russell illustrations
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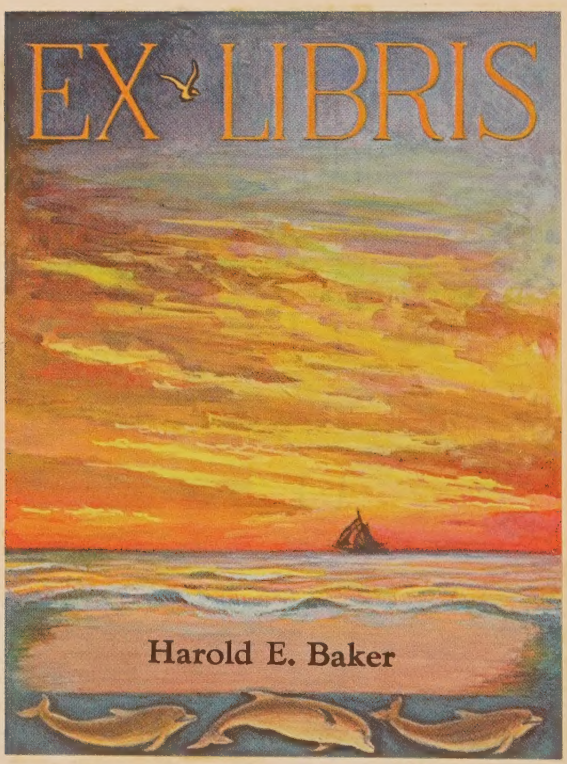

To My Dear Friend
Harry F. McGillin
"The top hand of the
◇ TC Ranch"
a great pal & noble friend
Wallace D. Coburn

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The Indians' Tale of Christ

Frontispiece

Rhymes from a Round-up Camp

By

Wallace David Coburn

Illustrated by

Charles M. Russell

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TO

MY COWBOY FRIENDS

THE BRAVEST, BEST HEARTED, AND MOST GENEROUS
COMRADES THAT I HAVE EVER KNOWN

Preface

MANY and varied volumes have been written concerning Western life by authors who have depended for their facts entirely upon a flying trip through the West, or a summer's sojourn in a Western city. It has been my aim in this little book of verse to tell of cowboy life as it actually was, twenty years ago, and as it may still be found to a limited degree in some parts of the West along the line between Texas and Northern Montana.

My characters are taken from real life as I have myself seen it during many years spent on the range, in town, and in camp with the wildest of wild cow-punchers. Some of these old companions are now successful and highly esteemed business men; others are still following their vocation on the now diminishing cattle-ranges; and others, too many, are gone forever from the ranges which they loved so well.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to my old friend and fellow range-rider, Charles M. Russell, the well-known cowboy artist, for his drawings which illustrate so faithfully and vividly the life which we knew together.

W. D. C.

MALTA, MONTANA,
July 1, 1903.

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Rhymes from a Round-up Camp

Wild West

WILD WEST! Sweet ruler of the past,
Whom I shall ne'er forget;
To you whose power once was vast,
These lines I write, and yet—
E'en as I write I fain would look
Upon your charms once more—
As when in bygone times I took
Advantage of the smiles you wore;
But you are gone and naught remains
Of your sweet presence here
Except your subjects of the plains,
Whose love for you was dear.
And even they are few and gray,
And with the passing years,
Like all things human, fade away,
Adown the vale of tears.
Yes! you are gone and in your stead
Dame Progress proudly stands,

"Dame Progress proudly stands"

With stolen crown upon her head
And blood-stains on her hands.
But though from sight of loving eye
You've sadly passed away;
My love for you shall never die
Till in the ground my form they lay.

The Cowboy

OVER the prairie the cowboy rides,
As a modern knight he stands alone,
Always ready with heart and hand,
A typical prince of the Western zone.

No other land can claim his like,
He's a native American, born and bred,
A product of God's noblest land,
The land for which his fathers bled.

Ode to the Old-Timers

SLOWLY, yet steadily, one by one,
The Old-Timers go to their last long sleep,
And in each Montana has lost a son
Whose precious soul she fain would keep.
But they all pass over the great divide,
To seek new fields on the other side.

But few remain of those heroes bold,
Who came "out West" in the early days,
And opened the mines of yellow gold
Where the elk and buffalo used to graze.
Ah! few of that gallant crew remain
Who years ago came across the plain.

How many people in this great State
Think of the hardships these men endured,
How many really appreciate
The wealth that they for our State secured?
Alas! there are few of those aged hearts
We may yet make glad ere the soul departs.

The Stampede

DID you ever hear the story of how one stormy night,
A wild beef herd stampeded, down yonder to the right?
No? Well, you see that sloping hill, beyond the sage-brush flat,
East of the old round-up corral, where all the boys are at?
'T was one night in November, and I was on first guard;
A storm was brewing in the west, the wind was blowing hard.
Of wild Montana steers we had about a thousand head,
Belonging to the "Circle C," and each one full of "Ned."
The season had been rainy and the grass was thick and long,
So the herd had found good grazing in the hills the whole day long.

The clouds had piled up in the west, a strangely
grotesque mass,
And the rain began to patter on the weeds and buffalo
grass.
The lightning flared up in the clouds, and all was
deathly still,
Except the melancholy howl of a coyote on the hill.
The vivid, shifting lightning kept bright the stormy
scene,
And I could see the broken hills, with wash-outs in
between.
And when Bill, who was standing first guard with me
that night,
Came jogging past, he 'lowed that it was certainly a
sight,
And then commenced to whistle, while I began to
sing;
The lightning flared along the sky like demons on the
wing.
But round and round rode Bill and me, with slickers
buttoned tight,
And looking like dim spectres in the constant chang-
ing light.

The thunder now began to peal and crash along the sky,
The cattle pawed and moved about, the wind went whistling by.
Then, suddenly, without a sign, there came an awful crash,
And my eyes were almost blinded by a bright and burning flash
That filled the air an instant, then as suddenly went out,
While little sparks of lightning seemed floating all about.
And then the scene that followed defies my tongue to tell,
For those wild steers stampeded when the deadly lightning fell.
I don't know how it happened, but when my vision clears,
I find that I am riding in the midst of running steers.
And, oh! the thoughts that filled my brain as in that living tide
Of hoofs and horns and glowing eyes, I made that fearful ride.

9 ". . . I spurred his reeking flanks, and pulled his head up high "

On, on, and on at deadly speed, I dared not slacken
pace;
A stone wall could not hinder us in that blood-
curdling race.
And if a cowboy ever prayed with fervor in his prayer,
'T was me among those madden'd beasts, I prayed
in my despair.
My horse was jammed and thrown about as o'er the
rocky ground
We sped like some vast torrent, with stubborn, sullen
sound.
But when my horse was almost gone, and Death
stalked all about,
I heard above the awful roar a cowboy's ringing
shout.
And, looking backward in the gloom, I caught a fleet-
ing glance
Of cowboys flitting to and fro, like spirits in a dance.
And then I felt my nerve come back, like some old,
long-lost friend,
For I had given up all hope, and waited for the end.
At first I could n't understand just what they hoped
to do,

But soon I saw they meant to cut that running herd
in two.
For after cutting off a bunch, they lined up with a
cheer,
To form a wedge of solid men and charge them from
the rear.
Then on they came through tossing horns, with old
Jack in the lead;
The cattle parted stubbornly, but did n't slacken
speed.
On and on, with sturdy force, those brave lads
struggled on,
But I doubted if they 'd reach me before my horse
was gone.
For, as I spurred his reeking flanks, and pulled his
head up high,
He slowly sank beneath me, and I felt that I must die.
But up again he struggled, then down he went once
more,
And I found myself a-knockin' at old Death's gloomy
door.
And when I got my senses the hoofs and horns were
gone,

And Bill was kneeling at my side with streaming slicker on.

You see, my leg was broken and my chest was badly crushed,

By half a dozen reckless steers, as over me they rushed.

But it 's hard to kill a cowboy; they 're pretty tough, you know,

Else I 'd been riding in the clouds with angels long ago.

Spring-Time

I LONG to greet the spring-time,
With its wealth of power to charm,
And sunny smiles that take the chill
Of winter from the farm.

When the snow is off the meadow
And the grass begins to come,
The farmers all look happy,
And the bees commence to hum.

'T is then that all the little birds
Begin to bill and coo
And try to build up happy homes,
Just as we humans do.

When every morn at sunrise,
A-sitting on a pole,
The yellow-breast, in rippling notes,
Pours forth his very soul.

The catbird, bathing at the spring,
Calls loudly to his mate,
A jaunty robin redbreast hops
Along the barn-yard gate.

'T is then that man's proud nature
Thrills with a softer glow,
That makes his heart beat faster
And his blood more swiftly flow.

I long to see the wild flowers
That in the spring-time bloom;
To watch them blossom in the sun,
And breathe their sweet perfume.

To saunter in the moonlight,
When everything is still
Except the plaintive calling
Of some lone whippoorwill.

'T is then that love's strange powers
Conquer the boldest hearts,
And many a war is waged and won
By Cupid and his darts.

When the air is filled with music,
And the woods are full of cheer;
Ah! we can't deny that spring-time
Is the best time of the year.

Cowboy Fun

"YES, stranger, them was red-hot times,
And things they was n't slow
In this here little, one-hoss town,
Some twenty years ago.

"Cow-punchers they was in their prime,
And genteel in their ways,
And did n't ride the grub line, like
You see 'em do now-days.

"The ranges they was big an' wide,
Where roamed the long-horned steer,
The wild horse and the buffalo;
Likewise the elk and deer.

" 'Nd sheep—that robber of the range—
Why, on these Western hills,
If any one had seen a sheep,
'T would have been a case of chills.

"Water it was plenty, and
The lakes was overflowed;
The grass it waved like billows,
When the western breezes blowed.

"The cowboy, he wore notches on
His ivory-handled gun,
To show the number of the scraps
That he had fought and won.

"There was Cussin' Sam, the captain,
And Oklahoma Dick,
And City Jim, the same as had
The fight on Beaver Crick.

"Bill Riley he was in his prime,
With Parson Sim, his chum;
And Tin-Horn Pete was twistin' bronks,
And was n't on the bum.

"Buck Berry, he was then alive,
And used to come to town
To circulate his money and
To throw good licker down.

"And Slippery Jake, the gambler,
A ornery galoot,
Was dealin' faro 'cross the way,
With skinnin' games to boot.

"Sich as loaded dice and montey,
With marked cards, on the sly;
But one day he played solitaire
Between the earth and sky.

"Old Dirty Dave, the round-up cook,
He, too, was workin' then;
With Club-foot Yank, 'nd Greaser Bill,
And old Panhandle Ben.

"While Cotton-Eye, the night-hawk,
Was then a top cow-hand,
As reckless as they make 'em,
And, you bet, he had the sand.

"The women-folks, them days, was brave,
And never seemed to care
To flirt and enter politics,
Or rip around and tear.

"But come and have another drink,
My throat is gettin' dry,
A-talkin' of them good old times—
Them happy days gone by.

"Gi' me some red-eye—that's the stuff—
Jar loose an' let her run;
There's nothing like old forty-rod
To open up the fun.

"Now, boys, let's have a stag dance,
And celebrate, you know;
The kag is full of whisky,
And our pockets full of dough.

"Come, stranger, don't be bashful,
This party ain't select;
Though you're a simple tenderfoot,
The boys they won't object.

"Say, boys, let's find a shepherd—
A herder—that's the cheese,
Like that old whisky soaker
With his dog between his knees.

"Now, herder, balance all"

"Come, Shep—you, over yonder,
A-talkin' to your dog;
This ain't no lunatic asylum;
Come, let's have a clog.

"Oh! you don't know how it's done, hey?
You're modest, that is all;
Come, boys, let's start the music;
Now, herder, balance all.

"Start, now; you're up against it;
Close up your blattin' face;
That's good; now slide out for the hills,
Your dog has quit the chase.

"Go! Pull your freight and vanish!
Get out and split the breeze;
Shake off the wool that's in your clothes—
A little faster, please.

"Now, gentlemen, the air is cleared
Of that flea-bitten bum,
Put up your guns and wet your throats
With Casey's fightin' rum.

"Here's to the happy days of old,
When wages they was high;
Come, drink, you won't get licker
In the sweet bye and bye."

To an Indian Skull

O ghastly relic of departed life,
Whose savage spirit once therein did dwell,
Couldst thou but voice thy crimson past,
What direful tales thy tongue could tell!

As on the reeking trail of war,
Thy bloody thirst was quenched in thee
When round the torture stake, with burning brand,
Thy cruel spirit laughed in fiendish glee.

And if that fleshless mouth could speak,
And cease its grim, post-mortem smile,
Wouldst thou confess thy bloody deeds
And fill these ears with stories vile?

As when thy mortal tongue was wont
To boast of all thy bloody crimes,
And how thy evil life was spent
In seeking scalps those by-gone times.

"O ghastly relic of departed life"

And how, when on the Western plains,
With war-plume dipped in paleface gore,
That lofty crest was parted with
The raven locks it proudly wore.

Where didst thou get this woman's scalp
That with thee in the tomb was found,
With scars of tomahawk and knife,
And weeping willow bent around?

Came it from some fair maiden's head,
Whose relatives had gone before,
Slain by thy relentless band,
Which thirsted for the white man's gore?

Or did it come from matron dame,
Whose little ones bewailed her fate,
As to her bleeding form they clung,
The victim of the red man's hate?

O ghastly relic of departed life,
Whose changeless smile is ever bold,
Couldst thou but voice thy crimson past,
What grewsome tales thou couldst unfold!

Grub Pile

FROM out the mess-tent's grimy door,
Making the cowboy's heart grow sore,
Morn after morn, in the same old style,
Comes the cook's call of "Grub Pile."
To each cowboy it means the same,
No matter what may be his name;
In the morn's chill air it sounds a mile—
That rasping cook's call of "Grub Pile."
How harsh it seems to the waking ear
When one more dream would be so dear!
Ah! naught will ever reconcile
The soul to that old call, "Grub Pile."

Bill and Parson Sim

BILL RILEY was a cowboy,
And a quicker shot than him,
There was n't in the country,
Exceptin' Parson Sim.

And I reckon you could ride the trail
From Texas to the line,
And braver men than Bill and Sim
I bet you could n't find.

Bill he was tall and lanky,
With black and piercin' eyes
That seemed to flash like lightnin'
When storm is in the skies.

His voice was soft and solemn-like,
His heart was kind and true,
But he could paint the town as red
As any man I knew.

Sim he was mighty near as tall,
With sunny eyes of blue
That seemed to laugh and sparkle,
As eyes will sometimes do.

The boys they called him Parson,
He owed it to his hair,
And to the classic language
He'd use when he would swear.

They chummed as boys together,
And learned to shoot and ride;
Worked for the same cow outfits,
And grew up side by side.

One bed it always done for both;
They used the same war-sack,
Stuck up for one another,
'Nd all their money'd whack.

Well, Bill and Sim one winter—
'T was back in '89—
Were batchin' near a tradin' post
Up north close to the line.

And they was havin' rafts of fun
And spendin' lots of coin,
Between the little tradin' post
And old Fort Assneboin.

But one night they took in a dance,
And there they met a gal,
'T was old Buck Berry's daughter—
His oldest daughter, Val.

Her right name it was Valentine,
They called her Val for short,
She was as fine a little rose
As bloomed in that resort.

Her hair was kinder yaller,
And shined like placer gold;
And on the hearts of Bill and Sim
She got an awful hold.

So when she danced with other men,
Well, Bill, he'd hit the kag,
And when Sim could n't get her smiles,
He, too, would want a jag.

Waltz, quadrille, and polkey
Was danced till break of day,
And both the fiddlers got so drunk,
The durned chumps could n't play.

Old Berry he was loaded, too,
And pulled his forty-five,
And worked on one musichin,
Like bee upon his hive.

But narry toon could Berry
With all his labor git;
The women-folks put on their wraps,
An' dancin' had to quit.

'T was then the bloody fight was fit,
The worst I ever saw,
And I have seen some red-hot scraps
Come off without a flaw.

You see, Bill, he was stalkin' round,
Intoxicated quite
On love and Injun whisky,
And itchin' for a fight.

" He turned his back on Sim "

While Parson Sim, he, too, had on
A pretty decent load,
'Nd tackled Val to take her home,
In language *à-la-mode*.

But just as he was askin' her,
And she got up to go,
Bill, he come up to where they was,
A-walkin' kind of slow.

And with a sort o' stately bow,
He turned his back on Sim,
And asked Val if she would n't take
The homeward ride with him.

Well, 't was over in a second,
A few cuss-words was said;
Sim he was grazed along the cheek,
And Bill's was through the head.

And there poor Bill lay bleedin',
A-gaspin' hard for breath,
With Sim a-standin' over him,
His face as white as death.

A look of horror crossed his face,
'Nd sorrer filled his eyes,
As Bill's brave spirit left the clay,
And started for the skies.

I reckon that he thought of how
In all those happy years,
They both had been like brothers,
And shared their joys and fears.

Then moanin' like, he took the gal,
And started for the door,
For she had fainted dead away
When Bill dropped to the floor.

But there were soldiers in the room,
Just waitin' for a show
To perforate a cowboy,
Like Parson Sim, you know.

And with a yell they pulled their guns,
And made a sudden rush:
They thought they held a winnin' hand,
But Sim he had a flush.

For now his fightin' blood was up,
And layin' Val aside,
To get her out of danger,
He let the bullets slide.

And every time his gun would crack,
A soldier hit the floor;
The room was filled with powder smoke,
And ran with U. S. gore.

Old Buck he got his gal away,
Then he come back to fight,
But everything was over,
And he saw an awful sight.

The soldiers they was lyin' round,
A dozen men or more;
Looked like the field of Gettysburg,
So many strewed the floor.

And Parson Sim was dyin',
With his arms around poor Bill,
His head a-lyin' on the breast
That now was cold and still.

He'd won the fight though wounded,
  Then kneelin' by the spot
Where Bill was lyin' cold in death,
  He fired the fatal shot

That let him follow after Bill;
  He died without a groan,
And with Bill restin' in his arms,
  He sought the great unknown.

We laid them on a sunny hill,
  They're sleepin' side by side
Beneath the Western prairie soil,
  Where once they used to ride.

And Val she never married,
  But sometimes comes to weep,
And wet the flowers with her tears,
  Where both her lovers sleep.

At the Animal Convention

Rabbit—

IN sweet repose beneath the rose,
Where gentle breezes sigh,
On nature's breast I fain would rest
Forever and for aye.

Deer—

In forest wilds, where nature smiles,
From hunters I would hide,
And softly dream of wood and stream,
While shadows softly glide.

Bear—

Amid white bones and pine-tree cones
On barren mountain's crown,
In darksome cave, with paw to lave,
I fain would lay me down.

Wolf—

I long to sleep where blood runs deep,
And dream of rippling gore;
I'd like to eat a ton of meat
And then—to eat some more.

The Old Cowboy's Tale

"RIGHT you are, son; in them days
A whizzer [1] would n't go;
And when a man would try it on,
His blood would shorely flow.

"I reckolect a incident
That happened up the crick,
Between a loud-mouthed whizzer-man
And Oklahoma Dick.

"This whizzer gent was on a tare,
An' takin' in the town,
An' in his rig an' shootin' irons
Looked scary,[2] I'll be boun'.

"He loomed up tall an' savage,
Like a hungry grizzly bear,
With shootin' irons 'nd bowie-knives,
'Nd long black curly hair.

[1] Bravado, or a show of fight without the necessary nerve to back it, commonly called a bluff.
[2] Threatening.

"Well, Dick an' me was sittin' in
The Bloody Heart saloon,
An' listenin' to the talent there
A-renderin' of a toon.

"When in this locoed stranger comes
A-twirlin' of his guns,
'Nd grindin' of his snarly teeth,
From which terbakker runs.

"'Nd shakin' out a load or two
To kind o' stop the deal,
He yelled out in a bawlin' voice
This darin'-like appeal:

"'My name is Long-haired Carter,
An' my fad is killin' men;
A corpse, it is my only friend;
My home, a slaughter-pen.

"'I'm rattlesnake an' grizzly,
My drink is pizen straight;
I live on blood 'nd powder smoke,
And light'nin' is my gait.

"'My yell is like a death-knell;
I wade in human gore;
The bravest men, they fan the breeze
Whene'er they hear my roar.

"'My eye is like the eagle's,
My hand is sudden death;
A graveyard blossoms at my door,
And hell is in my breath.

"'The only music that I love
Comes from a forty-five;
I've killed more human bein's
Than any man alive.'

"And when he finished up his song,
He sorter glared around,
As though a-lookin' for some chap
Who hankered to be downed.

"Well, everything subsided when
The stranger took the floor;
Some thought they was n't needed,
And vanished out the door.

"The musick, it was grindin' out
A soft and sollum air;
When Dick, he quietly got up,
'Nd, pushin' back his chair,

"He sauntered kinder calmly up
To that bloodthirsty guy;
Bit off a chew of twisted plug,
'Nd spit it in his eye.

"Then like a flash his gun he pulled
'Nd brought her up, full cocked,
To where old Long-hair's visage was
A-lookin' kind of shocked.

"Of course, we all expected then
To see some shootin' done,
'Nd crowded backward out of range
'Nd waited for the fun.

"Well, you oughter seen that bully,
With the juice a-running down,
'Nd drippin' off his whiskers
With a soft and sick'nin' sound.

"'Nd throwin' up his shakin' hands
As high as he could reach,
He dropped a-tremblin' on his knees
'Nd gave out this beseech:

"'Oh! pardner, save my life,' said he,
'I would n't hurt a child;
My name is just plain Carter,
And I 'm anything but wild.

"'Don't shoot, for God's sake, pard,' he said;
'I did n't mean no harm.'
You see, Dick's old six-shooter,
It worked a sort of charm.

"Well, Dick he emptied out his gun,
And drilled a hole or two
In Long-hair's hat and whiskers
For the wind to whistle through.

"And then he made him pull his freight,
With orders not to lag
Nor loiter by the roadside till
He struck the sage-brush sag.

"Well, Carter did n't wait to get
A second bid, you know,
But hit the highest places
In his eagerness to go.

"No, son; you could n't work a bluff
Them days, an' make it stick;
For if you ever tried it on,
Some gent was sure to kick."

A Father's Advice to his Son

DON'T marry a girl with dark blue eyes,
Whose love, the bards say, never dies;
Their minds are narrow, their hearts are small,
Their natures composed of unlimited gall.

Beware of the girl with eyes of gray,
For when you're wed she'll want full sway
Of your business affairs; also will use
Your hat, necktie, and, perhaps, your shoes.

Avoid the girl with the soft, brown eye;
They're all coquettes of the deepest dye;
So watch yourself when one you meet,
For, for downright flirts, they can't be beat.

All black-eyed girls be sure to shun,
They cause most evil now-days, son.
In fact, if this life you would enjoy,
Stay single as long as you can, my boy.

The Wolf Hunt

OVER the hills on a winter's morn,
In the rosy glow of a day just born,
With the eager hounds so fleet and strong,
On the gray wolf's track we jog along.

. . . . . .

Closely scanning with anxious eyes
The snowy crest of each rocky rise,
Stealthily on in the morning air,
The gray wolf seeks his rocky lair.

Back from the spoils of a midnight raid,
Red are his jaws from the feast he made;
But, cunning as ever, he glances round
And sniffs the snow on the frozen ground.

And now he stops and glances back
On the crooked windings of his track;
For, softly on the breeze has come
A scent that makes his fierce heart numb.

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" His fierce jaws snap, his eyeballs glare "

He also hears the crushing sound
Of trampling hoofs on the frozen ground,
And off he starts in sudden fear;
His instinct tells him foes are near.

And run thou must the Bad Lands o'er
As thou hast never run before;
For like the wind o'er hill and brake,
Grim Death comes dashing in thy wake.

And now the hounds are in full sight,
All eager for the coming fight,
Urged on by many a lusty cheer
From mounted hunters in the rear.

Foremost in the chase comes Fly,
Like meteor flashing through the sky;
Then neck to neck and nose to nose,
Brave Sport and Pedro swiftly close
The intervening space that's spread
Between them and the wolf ahead—

While each one eager for the race,
And old Don bravely setting pace,

Bob and Queenie, Prince and White,
Speed swiftly in the morning light;
Their motto is to do or die,
And naught but blood will satisfy.

Foot by foot and yard by yard,
With waning strength and breathing hard,
The wolf is swiftly losing ground;
He feels the breath of the leading hound;
His fierce jaws snap, his eye-balls glare,
He struggles hard in mad despair.

. . . . . .

The race is o'er, the battle won,
The wolf lies dying in the sun;
His midnight raids are of the past,
He's met the conquering foe at last.
Well done, brave hounds! Your savage prey
Was shrewdly caught and killed to-day.

Human Discontent

'TWAS stifling hot, in the month of May,
And all the people had much to say
About the heat, and the need of rain,
In order to save the farmers' grain.
And so the people in every town
Prayed that the rain might soon come down,
And their prayers were answered, and none too soon,
For the weather was dry till the first of June;
And the sky that for days had been so clear
Now showed signs that a storm was near.
The clouds on the earth their contents poured,
The lightning flashed and the thunder roared,
And joy replaced each look of care
As the grateful drops passed through the air;
And men who for weeks had looked so sad,
Sang and joked, for their hearts were glad.
Each wild flower raised its drooping head,
And a look of gladness the land o'erspread;

And the hosts of insects that came in waves
Now lay dead in their watery graves.
How musical sounded the soothing rain,
As it pattered on roof and window-pane,
When the dark'ning shadows seemed to glide
Through the driving mists at eventide;
But when a month had passed away,
And the rain continued to fall each day,
The people began to groan and fret,
And wish the country were not so wet.
And campers who had planned for days,
Now longed for the sun to shed its rays,
And that the sky would change its hue
From sombre gray to its natural blue.
But behind the clouds the sun still shone
In the broad expanse of heaven's blue dome,
And a brilliant rainbow in hues galore
Informed us all that the rain was o'er.
But thus it is that the human mind
Will always have some fault to find
With nature, as though God did not know
When to have sunshine, rain, or snow.

Hidden Treasure Mine

OH! them good old lucky days,
Them days of golden time,
When Alder Gulch was famous,
And Last Chance in its prime;
When gold dust was as common
As needles on the pine,
And Jim and me was workin'
In the Hidden Treasure mine.

The Treasure was a placer mine,
And every single day
We made a clean-up of the dust
That in her sluices lay.
And while the evenin' zeffers blew
We saw the nuggets shine,
When Jim and me was workin'
In the Hidden Treasure mine.

Them days, we never used to think
Or care about the way
That politicians spent their cash,
Nor what they had to say;
For men had to be honest,
Or else they'd stretch a line,
When Jim and me was workin'
In the Hidden Treasure mine.

And when I sit and ponder
On them old happy days,
When men were brave and loyal,
Though reckless in their ways,—
The sun it does n't seem so bright
As when it used to shine,
When Jim and me was workin'
In the Hidden Treasure mine.

But now poor Jim has passed away,
The Treasure is all gone;
Old Alder Gulch and Last Chance,
Are sad to look upon;

For now, above the very spot,
A jobber hangs his sign
Where Jim and me we used to work
The Hidden Treasure mine.

Sunrise in the Bad Lands

THE dawn is breaking in the east,
Above the Bad Land hills;
An early rising camp-bird sweet
His morning carol trills.

A rabbit darts behind a bush,
And sits in comic pose
To gaze with startled eyes at one
Of bunnie's human foes.

The month is crisp November, and
The brown earth calmly sleeps
Beneath the pure white mantle, that
Upon her bosom heaps.

The camp-fire smoke goes curling out
Upon the morning breeze,
With rare and grotesque forms that float
Among the leafless trees.

The timid deer comes down to drink
And play upon the sand,
Along the old Missouri's bank,
So picturesque and grand.

Then suddenly from out her bed,
The sun breaks into view;
To bid the world good-morrow with
A greeting ever new.

The Cowboy's Fate

ONE night on the fall beef round-up,
In October of ninety-three,
Jack and I stood guard together—
This is what he said to me:

"Yes, Bill, times have changed a little,
Since first we learned to ride;
Country's full of barbed-wire fences,
And the range is not so wide.

"And, Bill, you are rich and happy,
Got a wife and lots of gold;
Been a man and stuck to business,
While I—well, I'm getting old.

"Yes, I've been in many places,
Sorter on the French *qui vive;*
Would n't get but just located,
When I'd up and have to leave.

"Have to pack my bed and vanish;
Pull out for the high divide;
Seek a new range, strike a cow ranch,
Settle down and try to ride.

"Get a good job on the round-up,
Make a stake and go to town;
There fill up on Injun whisky,
Pull my gun and saunter 'roun'.

"Smoke the town and whip the sheriff,
Play 'em high and shoot and shout,
Till the air was filled with music
And the people all hied out.

"Then I'd saddle up my private,
Fog the street lights on the run,
Till I struck the open prairie—
Then my painting job was done.

"That is why I'm here to-night, Bill,
Ridin' roun' this old beef herd,
Listening to the coyotes holler—
Echoes of the life I've blurred.

"And it seems like luck's against me,
  Now that I am getting gray;
For you know the good old sayin',
  'Every dog will have his day.'

"I can't stand the hard knocks now, Bill,
  That I used to think was fun;
And I'm like an old cow pony
  That's forgotten how to run.

"Say, Bill, you may think I'm nervy,—
  Would n't ask if I was flush;
But a man can't stan' to winter
  Like a dogie in the brush.

"And I thought I'd better ask, Bill,
  If you'd let me have a show
Just to earn a winter's grub stake,
  Even if it's shovelin' snow.

"For, you see, I ain't partic'lar
  What I drive at nowadays,
Just to earn an honest livin',
  For it's steady work that pays.

"And a man can't make a fortune
Paintin' towns and gettin' drunk;
Tried it long enough to know, Bill,—
Wish I'd all the coin I've sunk.

"Thanks; I knew 't would be a cold day
When you would n't help me, Bill;
Did n't know jest where I'd winter,
And the weather's gettin' chill.

"These nights makes a feller wonder
Where his summer work has gone;
When the frost sticks to his whiskers,
And he needs a coonskin on.

"Hope we'll have a few more warm days,
Till we get these cattle shipped;
For this wind cuts like a blizzard,
Makes me feel like I'd been whipped.

"Two o'clock! Well, who'd 'a' thought it?
Time has flew on angel's wings,
As I heard an Eastern feller
Tell a girl down at the Springs;

59 “. . . we found his lifeless body”

"So, I guess I'd better hurry
And wake up the next relief;
Guess camp's over in that coulee,
Just beyond the rocky reef.

"So long, Bill; I'll see you later!"
And old Jack passed out of sight,—
Gaily singing as he galloped
To his death that stormy night.

For we found his lifeless body
When the morning sun arose,
With the diamond frost still sparkling
On his blood-bespattered clothes.

For, you see, his horse had fallen;
Struck a hole, and Jack was caught,
With his head crushed on a boulder—
Thus his tragic death was wrought.

Poor old Jack! Good-hearted always;
May his soul in peace abide,
Where good cowboys ride in comfort,
Far beyond the "Great Divide."

Jack and Bill

HEMMED in by the fierce Nez Perce,
On a wild and barren hill,
Lay two cowboys, bravely fighting—
One is Jack; the other, Bill.

Fiercely yell the painted redskins,
As they circle to and fro,
Eager for the white man's scalp-lock,
And to see his life-blood flow.

Long and well the white men battle,
One by one the redskins fall,—
Till at length poor Bill falls backward,
Wounded by a rifle ball.

"Jack, old man, my days are ended;
That last shot was through the breast;
But, before I cross the river,
Grant me this one last request.

"Promise me that when I've drifted
To that land where cowboys go,
That you'll let my dear, old parents
And my faithful sweetheart know.

"Take this ring and pack of letters,
And this lock of golden hair;
Give them back to gentle Nellie,
To my love, so true and fair.

"She'll be waiting in the twilight,
'Neath the hemlock on the hill,
Where the morning-glory blossoms,
Round the old, moss-covered mill.

"Tell her how I've been intending,
When the fall round-up was o'er,
To return and keep my promise
And to ride the range no more."

Then poor Bill fell back unconscious,
While old Jack fought grimly on,—
Fought until the shadows lengthened
And the light of day was gone.

63 "Then poor Bill fell back unconscious"

Night came on, and in the darkness,
While the redskin sentries slept,
With Bill lashed upon his shoulders,
Old Jack down a coulee crept.

Struggled over rocks and sage-brush,
Through a long and sultry night,
Till the sunshine of the morning
Brought the round-up camp in sight.

Back to life the cowboys nursed Bill,
Back to life and health once more,
And he duly kept his promise
When the fall round-up was o'er.

Jack returned the ring and letters
And the lock of golden hair,
But to Bill's thanks would n't listen,
Said, for thanks he did n't care.

. . . . . .

Years have passed, and in a valley,
Living with the birds and bees,
Bill and Nell their nest have feathered,
Sheltered round by greenwood trees.

There they dwell in loving union,
  Living but to live again:
Nell, the happiest of women;
  Bill, the happiest of men.

While, in endless, dreamless slumber,
  Where the blue-bells raise their crests,
With his task on earth completed,
  Old Jack in a coulee rests.

Born and bred in Western freedom,
  Rough he was; but who can say
That the books will not be balanced
  In his favor Judgment Day.

The Obsequies of Jack

POOR old Jack! we chose his bed-ground
Where the lone pine throws its shade;
And the willows wept in silence
Near the grave we sadly made.

Softly fell the snow, and ghostly,
Like a shroud it hid the ground;
And, except the parson's preaching,
Silence reigned supreme around.

And we felt a trifle lonesome,
As around the open grave
We listened to the parson's words:
"He hath taken what He gave,"

Or other words to that effect,
I can't remember now;
But which "seemed fitten" at the time,
I heard old Bill allow.

At the wind-up of the sermon,
We all sang *Sweet Bye and Bye;*
Likewise rendered *Rock of Ages*
And *A Mansion in the Sky.*

And, as in the grave we lowered
That brave form, to rise no more,
Every eye was overflowin',
Every cowboy's heart was sore.

"Dust of dust to dust returneth,"
Then the parson slowly said;
And the words seemed sad and sollum
To us mourners of the dead.

Thus we planted Jack that evening,
While the snow-flakes softly fell,
And he sleeps within the bosom
Of the West he loved so well.

The Cowboy's Grave

THE cow-herd grazes calmly
Among the grassy hills,
And a soft Montana zephyr
The sultry air distills.

The sun is sinking in the west,
The sky is bathed in gold,
And I listened to the cowboy speak
As this sad tale he told:

"See that lone tree in the coulee,
Just beyond the rocky reef,
Where the giant granite boulder
Stands out in such bold relief?

"Well, that lone pine marks the bed-ground
Of Jack's last, long repose;
Where the blue-bells nod in sorrow
When the breeze at evening blows.

"And the gray wolf's howl seems dismal,
When the nights are cold and drear,
Like a lost soul's wail for mercy,
Drawn out so long and clear.

"There, in his lowly bed, Jack sleeps
Beneath the rocky soil.
No more he'll ride the festive bronk,
No more the rope he'll coil.

"No more he'll paint the Western towns,
As in the days of yore;
For Jack has crossed the river, and
Will ride the range no more.

"No doubt you've heard the story
Of how he met his end,
Between the camp and cattle
Down yonder in the bend?

"And how his old friend Bill stood guard
All through that stormy night,
A-singin' to that wild beef herd
Until 't was broad daylight?

"And how they found Jack's body
When the morning sun arose,
With the diamond frost still glistenin'
On his face and bloody clothes?

"And I reckon you have heard of how
His friend Bill rode to town,
To get a preacher and a box
To plant Jack in the groun'?

"You see, they 'd been together, off
And on, for many years,
And when Bill heard that Jack was dead,
He lost some bitter tears.

"And when poor Jack was buried,
The cowboys stood around,
And watched the coffin lowered
In the cold and dreary ground.

"You've heard of how they knelt that day
Beneath a wintry sky,
And listened to the parson's words,
While not an eye was dry?

"And how his grave is kept so green
By Bill, whose life he saved
When he was sorely wounded,
And with the fever raved?

"And when those reckless fellows
Lay cornered in the hills
Behind their slaughtered horses,
He nigh gave his life for Bill's?

"But that's another story,
And it's time for me to start
These cattle for their bed-ground,
So, my friend, we'll have to part."

And off in haste the cowboy dashed
In the soft and mellow light,
To point the cattle toward the spot
Selected for the night.

And as I rode to that lone grave
Beneath the old pine tree,
The blue-bells nodded in the wind
And seemed to welcome me.

"Here lies poor Jack ; his race is run"

The little mound was covered
With trailing evergreen,
And there were signs of loving care
About the silent scene.

The sun's last rays were glinting
On the pine board at the head,
And the old tree groaned in sorrow
Above its cherished dead.

And sitting there in sombre thought,
In the slowly fading light,
I read this simple epitaph
Before it passed from sight:

"Here lies poor Jack; his race is run;
No more this range he'll ride;
At last he's got a steady job
Beyond the Great Divide."

'T was carved in clear-cut letters,
With rough but loving skill,
The date was fixed and underneath
The well-known name of "Bill."

A Tale of Love

VENUS, one mid summer day
In all her wealth of power,
Sent little Cupid out to play
In shady nook and bower.

Then with magic wand she led
Two young hearts to the mountains,
Where running brooks are amply fed
By Nature's crystal fountains.

And as each pleasant day they spent
Alone along the river,
Little Cupid's bow was bent
And arrows filled his quiver.

And as the time passed quickly by,
As time will sometimes do,
They wrote about the crimson sky,
And photographed each view.

Then Cupid, with his little darts
All tipped and feathered neatly,
Made war upon those two young hearts
And routed them completely.

And as with weary feet they fled
From Nature's crystal fountains,
They said the things they left unsaid
Behind them in the mountains.

Brookside Ranch

NESTLED in a fertile valley,
Where Dry Beaver finds its source,
And the Little Rocky Mountains
To the clouds their summits force;

Where the wild and reckless cowboy
Rides in all his careless grace,
Heedless of surrounding dangers,
Happiest of all his race;

Where the music born of Nature
Thrills the soul with strange delight,
As it floats on western breezes,
And the days are always bright;

Where the wild deer roam at pleasure
O'er the Bad Land's rugged brakes,
And the wild fowl fill the rushes
Growing round the prairie lakes;

There, among the verdant foot-hills,
Near a little mountain stream,
Lies the ranch—that dear "Old Brookside,"
Lovely as a maiden's dream.

Far from other habitation,
Romance fills its every lane,
As the changing landscape stretches
From the woods to treeless plain.

And the air was filled with fragrance,
As we strolled, my love and I,
In the green and cooling meadows
'Neath the blue Montana sky.

There, among the wild-rose thickets,
Massed along that little stream,
Hand in hand we strolled together,—
Life was like a summer's dream.

Till one day the voice of fortune
Filled our ears with gilded tales,
And we left our cherished "Brookside"
With its hills and pleasant dales.

Left its charms, but not forever,
Such a fate could never be,
Life would be devoid of pleasure
If our ranch we could not see.

So each year we'll pack our baggage,
When the days of summer come,
And we'll spend a month of pleasure,
At our dear old "Brookside" home.

The Indians' Tale of Christ

FAR from the white-man's habitation,
Under the northland's smiling sun,
Where, like a huge wave rolling down,
Mountain and plain blend into one;
There, where the shadows and sunbeams meet,
Once was the home of the great Blackfeet.

Lost in the clouds that veil the skies,
The crest of the Rockies bravely rise,
Jagged and crowned by eternal snow,
Faithfully guarding the plain below,
That by Dame Nature's hand is traced
Like an apron hung from her ample waist,
With rivers that burst from crystal springs
To act as Nature's apron strings.

The home of a tribe once rich and strong,
That ruled o'er their country well and long.

But as kings e'en bow to the hand of Fate
That makes brave hearts as desolate
As the barren sands of a sea-girt isle,
So bows the red-man, and yet the while
In his inmost soul he never yields,
But curbs the passion his spirit feels,
And trusts to the Manitou, czar of men,
To place him back on his throne again.

. . . . .

In all its strength, one summer day,
Of just what year there's none can say—
The old men say 't was "long ago,"
And what they tell is all we know—
The Blackfeet tribe, in grand display,
Along the Medicine River lay

The great sun-dance with tortures vile
Was being danced in royal style,
And, grimly, on both day and night,
The Blackfeet danced with all their might;
The youthful braves, with savage zest,
Enduring well the torture test.

Bathed in the light of breaking day,
The camp in regal splendor lay,
While formally greeting the rising sun
With weird chant and doleful drum,
Round and round with solemn tread,
The warriors danced and sang and bled.

Sang and danced, both young and old,
Praising the sun with its beams of gold;
Danced as the silvery moonbeams dance,
As on the river they float and glance;
Sang as the wind in the tree-top sings;
Sang of the joy that sunlight brings.

Sang like the wolf on the lonely hill,
Sang the song of the mountain rill;
Danced as their fathers danced of old,
As into the sky the great sun rolled;
Sang and danced in many ways,
Blessing the sun's life-giving rays.

Thus it was that summer's morn,
When into the Indian world was born

A Chief from out the rising sun,
Whose advent was a welcome one—
The Father of Men, the Manitou,
Into the world was born and grew.

Forth from the spirit-land he came,
From the happy hunting-grounds, his name
Soon dwelt dear on every tongue,
His praise by every lip was sung.
Wise in council, brave and true,
Called by men the Manitou.

Wise was he, no man as wise,
Out of death the corpse would rise;
The deaf could hear, the blind man see,
At a word from him, so wise was he.
Ah! happy then the people grew,
The world was changed from old to new.

He told of a land beyond the sky
Where people live and never die;
Dancing and singing they never tire;
Where suckling babe and white-haired sire

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"His last horse fell from under him"

Are made both strong of limb and mind,
And fleet of foot as the prairie wind;

Where people soar with wings of snow;
Where live together friend and foe.
Thus the Prophet came and spoke,
And in each Indian heart awoke
A feeling never there before—
A longing for this mystic shore.

But one day when the sun was cold,
This Prophet sought, with footsteps bold,
The buffalo, where dwelt the Sioux
Who knew not of the Manitou;
And they, while Heaven seemed to frown,
Sent warriors out to strike him down.

But brave was he, no man as brave;
He hurtled back the blows they gave,
And countless warriors bit the snow
Beneath his deadly lance and bow.
Three long days and weary nights
Drag slowly on, and still he fights.

But on the fourth his eye grew dim,
His last horse fell from under him;
His lance was broken, arrows gone,
And yet he battled bravely on,
Hurling stones of wondrous size
Till sank the sun in western skies.

Where, pausing on the mountain's brim,
It seemed to smile and beckon him;
And floating on its beams of light,
Into the clouds he passed from sight,
Back to his home beyond the sky,
Where people live and never die.

Thus came and went the Stranger Chief,
And, though his stay on earth was brief,
His teachings still remain behind
In many a dusky warrior's mind.
And when the sun sinks in the west,
The Blackfeet say "He's gone to rest."

The Little Cross

BACK in the Bad Lands' rugged brakes,
Colored by Nature's magic art,
Stands a cabin in sad decay,
That mutely appeals to the human heart.

Rudely it 's built of rough pine logs,
Fitted together with careless skill,
And, but for a little murmuring brook,
The air around is strangely still.

Thickly the wild flowers blossom round,
And the summer sky is calm o'erhead,
As the western sun moves slowly
In its crimson-colored bed.

A magpie wings its solemn flight
To an old pine on the hill,
And all seems sad and silent,
Except the noisy rill.

A coyote skulks among the rocks
That crown the near-by ridge,
And a rabbit sleeps beneath the shade
Of an old moss-covered bridge.

And as I sit and ponder
And view this silent scene,
A wild deer browses into view,
The jagged hills between.

And sitting on my restless horse
In blissful solitude,
I gaze and yet I hesitate
My presence to intrude.

And now the magpie leaves his perch
In the old worm-eaten pine,
And lights upon a little cross
Half hidden by a vine

That clusters round its wooden frame,
As if with fond embrace
To mark the lone tho' sacred spot
Of a child's last resting-place.

Only a little grave, and yet
Beneath that grassy mound
A little form sleeps calmly in
The cold and silent ground.

Only a little cross of wood
And a morning-glory vine,
Sheltered in the cooling shade
Of an old storm-beaten pine.

I gently pushed the leaves aside
That clustered round the frame,
To see if loving hands had traced
A line, or baby's name.

These simple lines and nothing more,
Were there to tell the tale
Of a child's sad death, a broken heart,
And a mother's anguished wail:

"Little Ned, our darling tot,
Sleeps in this wild and lonely spot;
And with him sleeps his mother's love,
His soul is with his Father above."

Ah! whose but a mother's gentle hand
Could smooth with loving care
The earth above her baby boy,
And place those flowers there?

For now I see a little bunch
Of pansies dried and old,
Tied with a faded ribbon,
All streaked with clinging mould.

And as I hastened from the spot
Beneath the old pine tree,
The coyote gave a mournful howl
That almost startled me.

The wild deer vanished in the hills,
The rabbit left the shade
Beneath the old moss-covered bridge,
At my unseemly raid.

The magpie soared on solemn wing
Above the grassy mound;
Where slept his little playmate in
The cold and clammy ground.

And rocking in the gentle breeze
Above his earthly bed,
The old pine sang sweet lullabies
Above its cherished dead.

No marble slab with chiselled words
Could half so sacred be
As that vine-covered little cross
Beneath the old pine tree.

The Cowboy's Reply

OLD and blemished and flecked with gray,
A cow-horse feebly stands,
A weak reminder of the day
He smote the desert sands
With flying hoofs that held the speed
Of wings or prairie wind,
The model of a noble breed,
His equal hard to find.

But e'en as since the world began,
The march of Father Time
Has spared not beast nor even man,
But passeth on sublime;
Hence, burdened with a score of years,
The old horse bravely stands,
No more he 'll chase the long-horned steers
Across the prairie sands.

His head drops low, a mist bedims
That eye once full of pride;
A tremor passes through his limbs,
His age he cannot hide.
But, hark! his cowboy owner speaks,
With cold scorn in his words,
A flush of pride lights up his cheeks,
And ill his wrath he curbs:

"No, stranger, not for all the wool
That grows upon your bands,
Not even for your money, fool!
Nor all your stolen lands,
Would I, while able to draw breath
Or pull a trigger straight,
Sell that old friend—I'd rather death
Would hurry up my fate.

"So, pard, I laugh your bid to scorn!
Your money you can keep!
For that old horse was never born
To drive a band of sheep!"

The Cowboy's Regret

WHOOP-UP CITY it was called,
In them old, happy days,
When cowboys they wore cutters
And were genteel in their ways.

And when I look at that old town
And see them cussed swells
A-ridin' wheels with boys' pants on,
And ringin' little bells,

While by their side, or else in front,
As bold as any man,
A gal with men's apparel on
The breezes swiftly fan,

Why, it makes me feel that should this world
Come to a sudden close,
I could gladly cross the river
That for everlastin' flows.

And with the pretty angel gals,
A-soarin' through the sky,
I'd bargain for a pair of wings,
And try and learn to fly.

The Montanas at Caloocan

THE boys lay in their trenches,
All eager for the fray,
Before the town of Caloocan
On that eventful day.

Old Glory floated overhead,
And courage filled each breast,
For they were from Montana,
The Queen State of the West.

Where Nature smiles serenely
Beneath a Western sky,
And the mountains' war-scarred summits
Echo back the eagle's cry.

The bugle sounds the charge along
That waiting line of blue,
And at its clear and signal notes
The boys charge straight and true.

"Hurrah for the Montanas!"
Was the shout that rent the air,
And burst from Utah warriors' throats
Amid the battle's glare.

For step by step, in perfect line,
They marched as on parade;
To take the town or meet his death
Was what each soldier prayed.

Like countless wasps the bullets swarm
Around that gallant band,
But on to the charge our heroes go
With a cheer for their native land.

They rout the foe, the Stars and Stripes
Wave o'er the burning town,—
The flag that never yet has found
A foe to haul it down.

So let us sing a song of praise
For each and every one
Of those brave boys who fought so well
Beneath a tropic sun.

And, also, let us shed sad tears
For those who nobly fell,
For he who meets a soldier's death
Has done his duty well.

7

Nature's Grand Opera

I LOVE to hear the raindrops
On the old woods patter down,
'T is a softer, sweeter music
Than you listen to in town;
With hailstones for the tenor,
And old thunder for the bass,
The raindrops sing soprano
As they seek to kiss your face;
While to and fro with silent grace,
Chain-lightning bravely tries
To dance the mystic serpentine,
Along the stormy skies.

'T is an opera from Nature,
Only sung on Nature's stage,
And 't is in the merry spring-time
That it seems to be the rage;
The setting of the stage is
Well adapted to the play,

With its clouds of inky blackness
On a curtain sombre gray;
But the last act is the master stroke,
When, arching over all,
The rainbow—grand, spectacular—
Forbids the rain to fall.

Evening in the Bad Lands

A SULTRY day draws to a close,
Among the Bad Land brakes,
And the summer sun sinks in repose
Beyond the prairie lakes.

The landscape spreads before the eye
A panoramic view,
That stretches out from sky to sky,
In ever changing hue.

The swift Missouri sweeps along
Its rough and rocky bed,
Singing a hoarse and sullen song
Above its silent dead.

Softly the old trees sigh o'erhead,
Woo'd by the western breeze,
Like love-lorn maid by Cupid led
Among the birds and bees.

Dame Nature smiles with lazy mien
As in the changing light
She doffs her bright and lively green
And takes the garb of night.

Each bird has sung his evening song,
The bees have gone to sleep,
And night treads silently along
In shadows thick and deep.

A grand and peaceful star-lit night,
That follows after day,
And comes with soft and soothing touch,
To charm our cares away.

And yet what countless sins are wrought,
In one short summer night
Behind the mask of darkness that
Obscures the human sight,

By men and women, young and old,
All heedless of the fact
That God is watching over all
And sees each covert act.

On the Old Riverside

IN camp on the banks of the upper Missouri,
In the heart of the Bad Lands, the home of the deer,
Where the landscape is sketched by the hand of Dame Nature,
And naught but the music of Nature you hear.

Where the gray wolf sings bass to the coyote's tenor,
And the voices of hills echo back the refrain;
While weird and sad o'er the river comes floating
The hoot of the owl as he prophesies rain.

There, where the cottonwood trees cast their shadows,
Dusky and long in the soft eventide;
Happy, indeed, were the days that we lingered,
Hunted, and camped on the old riverside.

And oft, oh, how often! When Worry and Sorrow
Threaten with talons of woe open wide,
Have I longed to revisit the home of Dame Nature,
And bask in her smiles on the old riverside.

Yellowstone Pete's Only Daughter

YES, this is the Milk River Valley,
And that's the old ranch that you see,
Where Yellowstone Pete lost his daughter,
The pride of the 7 U. P.

Was she pretty?—Well, stranger, your knowledge
Of these parts is shore incomplete,
When you ask such a comical question
'Bout the daughter of Yellowstone Pete.

Why, man! If the heavens were bluer,
And pansies were deeper in hue,
They could n't "size up" with her peepers,
Which shone like the spring poet's dew.

Her teeth were like snowdrops made whiter,
Her hair like the sealskin she wore,
Only softer and silkier and browner,
And she was true blue to the core.

Was old Yellowstone Pete's only daughter,
Whose voice was the envy of birds,
As she warbled at night to the long-horns,
Or when pointing her father's trail herds.

She was happy and good and as loving
As an angel could possibly be,
With always a smile and a greeting,
For tough old cow-punchers like me.

But what I was startin' to narrate,
Before you cut into the game,
Was a love affair she tangled up in,
And the tragical end of the same.

You see, she was borned in this country,
Her mother, a woman of gold,
Kissed her baby and lined out for Heaven,
When Beauty was seven days old.

The boys, you see, nicknamed her "Beauty,"
And each one, he fought for his turn
At feedin' her out of the bottle,
But dress her—we never could learn.

So Pete he sent off for a nurse girl
And a teacher (not stunning for looks),
To give her the care of a woman,
And learn her the knowledge of books.

Thus Beauty grew up at the home ranch,
And learned how to shore ride and shoot,
Also play and sing on the pianer,
And to tie down a wild steer to boot.

And charming—why, partner, the sunbeams
They scrapped for the sweets of her face,
And the alkali dust and the zephyrs
They jockeyed to get second place.

So was it a wonder young Dawson,
The son of a neighbor of Pete,
Lost his heart to this rose of the prairie,
And his love for her could n't be beat?

"Buck"—that was the handle he went by,
Had pre-empted some learnin' at school,
Was a handsome and big, manly feller,
And in a gun-fight was shore cool.

And there was n't no man round the country,
Could ride with him down the Red Lane,
He could rope, fork, and ride with clean saddle
Any outlaw that ever wore mane.

They 'd been youngsters and brought up together,
And Dawson was shorely dead game,
His father a wealthy old-timer,
All burdened with early-day fame.

Yes, Beauty loved "Buck," that was certain,
But a gal's ways are never foreseen,
And you can't tell what 's liable to happen
Between the betwixt and between.

So when a young feller from college
Comes a-romancin' like out this way,
Well, things looked a little promiscous,
And there was the devil to pay.

Of course, he was welcomed by Beauty,
As the flowers are welcomed in May;
His college pin pleased her, I reckon,
And he had a girl-catchin' way.

But wait till I roll me a smoke, pard,
To filter my bad feelin's down,
Makes me wanter shore squander some powder
When I ponder on that sneakin' houn'.

Well, we was all out on the round-up,
When this college masher, you see,
Ran off with old Yellowstone's daughter,
The pride of the 7 U. P.

Now, old Pete he shore worshipped his daughter,
Loved her better than money or life,
For she was the pride of his old age—
The gift of his beautiful wife.

So he and young Dawson together,
With hearts like the lead in their guns,
Hit the trail of this college-bred villain,
And secured him before many suns.

The gal they found up in Butte City—
He'd deserted her up there, you know;
But Dawson caught him near the border,
Where numerous cottonwoods grow.

"They fought to the death with their bowies"

And there, in the depths of the forest,
With the beasts and the birds lookin' on,
They fought to the death with their bowies,
Till the Eastern-bred feller was gone.

And Beauty—she married "Buck" after,
But never seemed happy or gay,
Like the Beauty we'd worshipped from childhood,—
She just drooped, shrunk, and withered away.

Yes, she paled like the flowers in summer,
And died with the leaves in the fall;
And we buried her close to her mother,
While the sunshine went out of us all.

Poor old Pete, his hair white as the snowdrift,
And eyes that stare vacant and old,
Sits and sobs at the foot of two gravestones,
All alone, whether hot days or cold.

All alone? No, for Buck often joins him,
Grim and stern, with his face like a stone;
Never smiling nowdays like he used to,
When he tries he winds up with a moan.

No, the sun don't shine quite as it used to,
And the wind has a lonesomer sound,
As it sings soft and mournful in summer,
And howls when old winter comes round.

The Cowboy's Song

A COW-MAN'S life is the ideal life,
I fain would have no other,
In rain or shine I drink my wine
To Nature and her lover.

Out on the prairie's rolling plain,
No matter what the weather,
My horse and I will live or die,
For work we must together.

Though far from doctor's skilful aid,
We quaff the wine of freedom,
And feel the wealth of perfect health,
By trust in Nature's wisdom.

We slumber 'neath the open sky,
And, while the stars above us
Shine softly down from heaven's crown,
We dream of those who love us.

"Out on the prairie's rolling plain"

So gaily tread the trail of life,
Though it be strewn with sorrow;
Cast care away, enjoy to-day,
And shed your tears to-morrow.

The Serenade

ONE night as I sought the silence
Of an ancient village street,
And the sprites of night with pretence
Of communion seemed to meet,

My thoughts were suddenly arrested
By a voice both sweet and clear,
That with subtle charm was vested,
Dazzling aught that lingered near.

"O charming girl, with kisses sweet,
I'd leave this world your lips to greet;
While for the right to call you mine,
I'd give my soul and not repine!"

Thus the words, so sweet and tender,
Lingered on the midnight air,
Floating through the starlit splendor,
In a cadence rich and rare.

And I wondered what sweet singer,
'Neath his lady's window-sill,
Could be winging such grand tenor
On the air so calm and still.

And I thought of that old adage,
"Love will always find a way,"
As this lover sent his message
Up to where his darling lay.

So I strained my ears to hearken,
Lest some note I should not hear,
For I felt my life would darken
If e'en one escaped my ear.

And in fancy I could witness
This love scene, like those of old;
This maid seemed to me a princess
Courted by a warrior bold.

I knew that he who sweetly warbled
Such celestial music could
Be no other than some noble,
She some fairy of the wood.

As in dreamy mood I lingered,
Cupid, urchin of repute,
Restlessly his arrows fingered,
Watching for a chance to shoot.

But, alas! for soft emotion!
What is this breaks on the ear?
Oh, this double-damned awakening
Of my dreams I cherished dear!

For from out the devil's dungeon
Seeming comes a voice of woe,
Saying: "See here, Alec Johnsing!
You just stop that noise and go!

"You'se been brayin' 'neath my winder
Like er melancholy mule,
And I warns you to meander,
'Fore I break de Golden Rule.

"I'll come down and trounce you, nigger!
My affections you can't win;
On your coffin you can figger,
Ef I cotch you here agin!

"An' what's more, I'll—" but by this time
Human strength could stand no more,
And I passed in double-quick time
Through oblivion's open door.
(I simply swooned away.)

My Boyhood Days

FROM out the fount of memory,
A voice comes sweet and low,
Whispering tales of childhood—
The tales of long ago.

The sweet voice deftly changes
The present for the past,
And the charm of recollection
Around my soul is cast.

It tells of days of sunshine,
Of fields and running streams,
With now and then a spanking
To mar my youthful dreams.

It brings back vivid pictures—
Reproductions of the past,
That entertain my fancy,
In visions thick and fast.

Down through the vale the old stream flows,
  Rendering soft and sad
The same old tunes that seemed so sweet
  When I was but a lad.

I see again my boyhood chums,
  Likewise the swimming-pool
In which we used to congregate,
  Our blistering backs to cool.

Again I stalk with father's gun
  Along the old "Jack's" trail;
Again I set the "figure 4"
  To catch the cotton-tail.

I live and dream those happy days,
  When pony, rod, and gun
Were in my eyes far greater than
  All else beneath the sun.

Kit Carson and Bill Cody
  Were to me the only men,
Beside my father, worthy of
  My boyhood notice then;

While Presidents and Senators,
With all their pompous ways,
Were classed by me a common lot
Of citizens those days.

I gaze with softly filling eyes
Within the old schoolroom,
Where long but happy days were passed,
The best from life's fair loom.

I hear my teacher's well-known voice,
I note her kindly face,
I would that I could meet her now
Within that same old place.

With her, the teacher, patient, kind,
And me, the same small lad,
My school-friends gathered at their desks,
Some good—some not—some bad.

Oh! would that I could live again
Those days of early youth,
With stone-bruised feet and freckled face,
So happy, so uncouth!

But they have gone forever—
Yet will they fondly stay
In memory's pleasant fountain
Forever and for aye.

The Grave

WHERE dines the worm on human heart,
And sleeps in human brain,
Where 'mid the bones of mortal man
The watercourses drain,
There is our last abode.

Nor can we find a plan, forsooth
Whereby our cherished dead
May sleep in better comfort
Than in an earthy bed
With lizard, snake, and toad.

And why? All other customs
Of life improve with age—
We drop the old ones for the new;
But never yet has sage
Improved upon the grave,

The gloomy grave, where tons of earth
  Shut out the light of day,
And where, to moulder into dust,
  Our forms are hid away—
    The timid and the brave.

'T is sad! Aye, even shameful!
  That we no better plan
Can find for caring for the clay
  Of God's own image—man.

Philosophy

THIS world is filled with vain regrets;
Contentment is a jewel
That will not shine for those who pine
And think the world so cruel.
"My burden is so great to bear!"
Some people cry too often;
While others thrum the banjo
From the cradle to the coffin.

If we should stop lamenting o'er
The past—a human habit,—
I venture we would all agree
This life is as we make it.
Then, why, when unavoided cares
Besiege our lives so often,
Do we not thrum the banjo
From the cradle to the coffin?

And as you thread through life you'll find
Philosophy won't hurt you,
But if you try you'll ne'er deny
That it becomes a virtue.
So never cry in sore distress,
"My lot I cannot soften!"
But simply thrum the banjo
From the cradle to the coffin.

Old Jack's Introduction to Wild Horse

"WILD HORSE was surely a promisin' town 'long 'bout '83," ventured the old cow-puncher, in reply to a remark I had made concerning the town we had just passed through on our way from the round-up camp to the Cross P ranch, at which place I hoped to meet my friend and business associate, Mr. M——.

"These here hills were covered with cattle them days; wages was high, and cowboys was onto their business and was n't mixed up with kids and greenhorns, like these would-be cowpunchers that come up over the trail nowadays with a bunch of dogie cattle, and imagine they've learned all there is 'bout punchin' cows.

"And the captain of the round-up them days had to be a sure enuff cow-man in order to hold his job. He had to have plenty of practical cow-sense, or he could n't hold his position no longer 'n you could hold a bull by the tail."

Then, pulling his horse down to a walk, old Jack seemed to fall into a pensive frame of mind, from which I aroused him by saying, "But you were commencing to tell me something about Wild Horse—" hoping to get him started on one of his cowboy stories, in which line I knew him to be an adept. Awakened from his reverie, he made the following response to my suggestion: "Well, I on'y kind o' remarked that this here camp was n't always on the bum, an' when I first saw it things was run high an' open, an' every man was your friend out an' out, or your deadly enemy, one or t'other. No half-way-between business went them days, you can gamble on that.

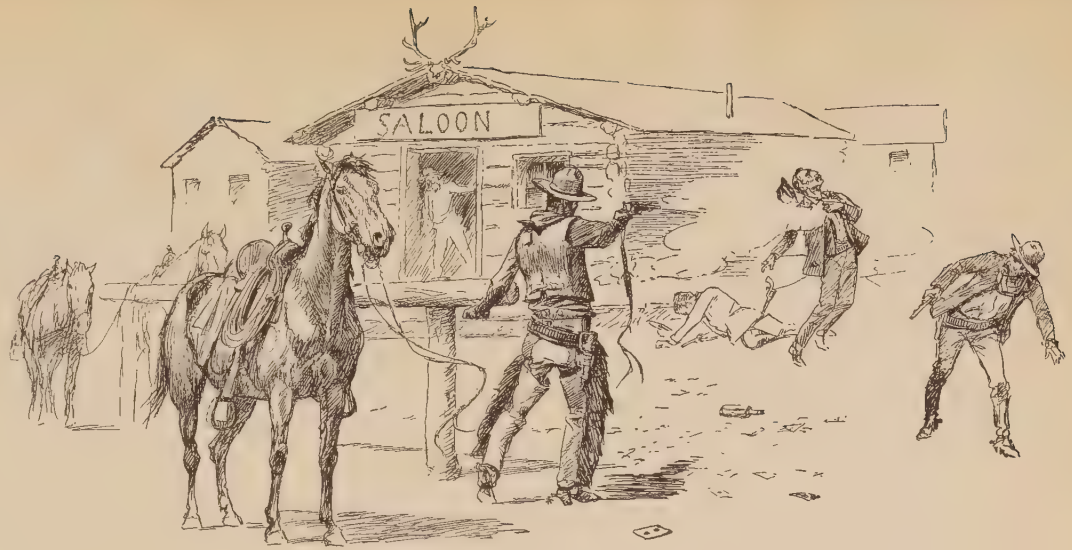
"When a man pulled his gun he had to use it or take his medicine, unless, of course, he got the dead drop, in which case things could be sort o' complimised, as it were.

"Wild Horse at that time had the most genteel and legitimate graveyard in the country—what I means by legitimate is, that every gent reposin' in her had died game, with his boots on an' his gun smokin'.

"And you consequently conceive that we was

judishesly proud of our little health resort. Did I help to build said cemetery? Well, with ondue respect to the other survivors, who was active members and observers of law and peace, I presume to modestly remark, without any complication of conshunce, that I duly caused five to be planted therein, all done up in fair and considerate gun practice—the result of which I carry a few suvineers, such as these."

As he said this my companion threw open his shirt bosom and exposed a chest bronzed by years of hardship, and blemished here and there by ugly-looking scars, evidently caused by knife and bullet wounds. Then, after grimly enjoying my astonishment, while he rolled a cigarette, he calmly resumed his conversation: "Yes, pard, them was certainly stirrin' times, an' I well remember the first time I struck Wild Hoss. I comes ridin' up to a hitchin' post in front of the Bloody Heart saloon, which was the most austentatious and pop'lar business house in town, when out comes a couple of tin-horn gamblers and a cowpuncher called Panhandle Ben, a-cussin' of each other in language most disrespectful, an' just as they struck the sidewalk, the tin-horns they pulled their guns



C. M. Russell.

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"I pulls my guns an' cuts down on them there tin-horns"

an' commenced to fog Ben up a batch. They was n't any quicker than old Panhandle, howsomever; but, you see, they had previsly touched Ben for his gun, while he was under the influence of tangle-leg sperrits, and had taken out all the cattriges, so, naturally, his gun snapped.

"Well, there they was a-foggin' poor old Ben like he was a beef, an' him a-dodgin' an' a-snappin' of his old shootin' iron, an' lookin' awful desperate like —the bullets makin' themselves shorely numerous and drillin' of him like he was a swingin' target. Of course, he knew he was up against the worst of it, as was self-evident from the oppression of his countenance.

"Well, it was shorely too much for any gent to withstand—too many for yours trooly, anyway; so, without any ondue recitation, I pulls my guns an' cuts down on them there tin-horns, a-throwin' fire an' brimstone like a camp-meetin' preacher. An' when the fireworks was over an' the smoke had kind o' floated off on the evenin' zeffer, I sees the enemy is completely analyzed an' defeated, bein' as how they're layin' on the sidewalk a-swelterin' in their

gore, an' so dead you could almost smell 'em. Old Panhandle, he was punctured two or three times through the carcass, but eventooly resusticated sufficiently to thank me generously for my timely reinforcements before he coughed up his sperrit a couple of hours later on.

"This, pard, was the way I made my eggsit into Wild Hoss town, an' it was shorely a cheerful one, considerin' as how the boys all gave me a most welcome conception in the Bloody Heart whiskey tepee that night, an' made me chairman of their committee on town laws to promote peace an' prosperity in general."

The Half-Breed's Tale

"YAS, pardnair, dat am T'ree Butte, dat where Gen'l Miles she'll fight de hinjun, de —— Nez Percé, de same what steal my ole 'omen and take de hair ob my brudder, five—ten—fifteen year ago. By gar! de ole 'omen she'll be mighty fine gal den, and was cos' me seventeen pony an' four sack tobacco; she half-breed blood hinjun, adop' by de Assneboine war chief, Medicin' Bear.

"Dem day, me was hun' de buf'lo an' sell de hide to white men trader, what keep de store at Hood Camps, 'long Missour' River, and sometime trade wid de hinjun, too. Well, one day, when de sign was good, me out look for de buf'lo; been on trail all day; mebby so, twenty mile from de camp. Sun she'll be pretty hot, an' pony she be gettin' pretty tired, and me starve like de wolf in winter—wid no

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meat, no tea, no flour for to eat. But jus' when me t'ink me look for de water hole an' make some camp for de night, me see 'way off on de hill one big dus', like de cattle what she'll make on de roun'-up when de cowboy she'll cut out, or rope de ca'f. Well, by gar! me t'ink all de buf'lo on de pra'r' dey'll be in one big bunch when me see dem come ober de hill, wid plenty hinjun ridin' all 'roun' dem. Well, me get behind de cut-bank and t'ink me watch till dey go pas','bout half-mile off.

"But one hinjun, she'll get after one ol' buf'lo bull an' run him an' shoot him wid de arrow, but his pony pretty tired an' not can run fas' 'nough to catch ol' bull. Well, by gar! here dey came as straight to me as de goose she'll fly, an' when de hinjun get close by, me know him to be Black Cloud, de Nez Percé w'at kill my brudder and steal my squaw. What I do den? Well, by gar! me laught a pretty good laugh an' watch de hinjun run de buf'lo down de cut-bank in de coolee out ob sight ob de oder hinjuns, an' him all time shoot de arrow 'way at ol' bull. Den I take de rifle an' ride after her—she no see me, she want kill ol' buf'lo so bad—

so me run up behin', shove de gun in his back, an' tell him stop his pony. Well, by gar! she know me, an' look pretty scart, like de coyote in de trap. But I take his hunting bow an' long knife an' make him get off his pony an' lay down on de groun'. Den I cut some string an' tie him like de cowboy tie de big steer. She look pretty seek, like do poison dog, but I laugh all time an' tell him mighty glad to see him, all same brudder; but she no seem glad see me, 'cause she know she mus' die. Well, me take de hinjun's bow an' arrow an' go back an' kill de ol' buf'lo bull in de coolee—cut off some de meat, eat some de raw libber to make me strong heart, den come back, put hinjun an' meat on hinjun pony an' go 'way back in de hill, where Black Cloud's frien's no can come; an' all time I talk an' laugh at Black Cloud an' call him squaw fighter, heart like de li'le bird, an' all de oder bad names dat I t'ink, but she no say one wor', jus' keep his mout' shut, like de pony. Well, me take him 'way off in de Bad Lan's, mebby so t'ree mile; make li'le fire, cook an' smoke, an laugh at Black Cloud, an' tell him she's pretty goo' man for fun, den when de moon she'll come up

ober de hill, I put some buf'lo skin in de hinjun's mout', tie him to de groun', an' den I take de two pony an' start for de big hinjun camp, w'ere I know I fin' my ol' 'omen w'at Black Cloud stole. I soon fin' trail w'at plenty pony make an' w'en de moon she'll be jus' ober de feder in my hat I fin' my squaw, steal some fresh hinjun pony, an' go back to Black Cloud. Course, de ol' 'omen she'll be pretty glad see me 'cause Black Cloud she'll be pretty mean to him an' hit him plenty wit' de club, so his back all cut like in de sun-dance. Black Cloud she'll look pretty mad w'en we get back an' try to break de rope an' eat de string, but his mout' too full buf'lo robe.

"Well, I tell my squaw to put de long rope on Black Cloud's feet an' tie it to one pretty wild pony. Den I take Black Cloud's hair an' say, 'Good-bye, Black Cloud, wit' de li'le heart; you go back to your people.'

"Den we get on de oder ponies an' turn de wild pony loose wid Black Cloud, an' 'way she go like de win', ober de rock an' sage-brush, straight for de big camp. Well, me an' my ol' 'omen we'll run 'long-

side an' whip de —— Nez Percé wit' de long raw-hide till she's dead, den we come back to ol' Fort Bel'nap an' dance t'ree day and night wit' de Assne-boine hinjun."

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